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ADDRESS
OF
HON. THOMAS B. REED,
AT
Grand Army Reunion, Old Orchard,

August 7, 1884.

COMRADES OF THE GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC:—As a tribute to your worth and to your services, this vast and splendid audience, the largest on which my eye ever rested, surpasses any speeches we can possibly make. Free from all taint of ulterior purpose, spontaneous, natural as the tidal march of the ocean on the shore, it is a great throb of the popular heart beating in recognition of you and of your deeds. And why should not this throng of human beings pour from every hill and valley? They come to do honor to those noble qualities which have made human history in the past and human progress in the future possible. They are honoring their own better

natures, their own higher attributes. War is a terrible misfortune, but some of the rarest virtues of humanity are evolved out of that crucible, white with the blinding heat of passion. All men rise to honor self sacrifice, that noble quality which lifts us beyond our little personality and makes us part of the warp and woof of that race which has made the whole world blossom like the rose. All men rise to honor courage ; not that brute fearlessness, born of ignorance and of the flesh, but that nobler courage, born of the soul, which faces not only death, but the long and terrible marches, the fever of wounds, the depression of defeat, and all the frightful experiences of that weary road which led to the glorious citadel of liberty, over which floats to-day in the serene upper air the flag of a land that knows no slave again forever. When Frederick the Great led his mighty army to the conquest of Silesia, his battalions marched and fought and conquered by the vigor of a discipline which had gone on for a quarter of a century. When the troops of the German Empire set out for the campaign of Sadowa, a lifetime devoted to the exercises of war had made of them a machine fit to execute the will of despotic power. Not thus your march. Out of the midst of your fellow citizens you stepped. The sight of human blood had never filled your eyes. You went, not as machines, but as men, to execute your own will and the will of the people. And when your work was done, silently, like the subsidence of one of the great forces of nature, you took your places among your fellow men to help produce for them and yourselves the comforts and necessities of life. Upon no grander spectacle has human history ever looked ! What you have done and suffered has not gone without its recompense. It is ordained in the providence of God that good deeds contain the germ of their own reward. Another day than this has been consecrated to the memory of the dead ; this day is consecrated to the tender companionship and fraternity of the living. What is the best good of life ? It is not high station, or high honors. My friend who sits there (Mr.

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Blaine), who has had them all, will tell you that good fellowship of friends and hearty comradeship is better than all place and fame. To be interlaced one with another in thoughts and hopes and sympathies, is to become part and parcel of that eternal humanity which is so much greater and nobler than any of us poor atoms. Comrades, you have been welded together by the white heat of battle! To have lived together, to have suffered together, to have had great thoughts and to have done great deeds together, what solider foundation of friendship can there be on earth? It must outlast all time, and if it be true that on the other shore we take up our characters and friendships where we leave them here, the great possibilities of reward in the future will transcend our highest hopes and our loftiest words.





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